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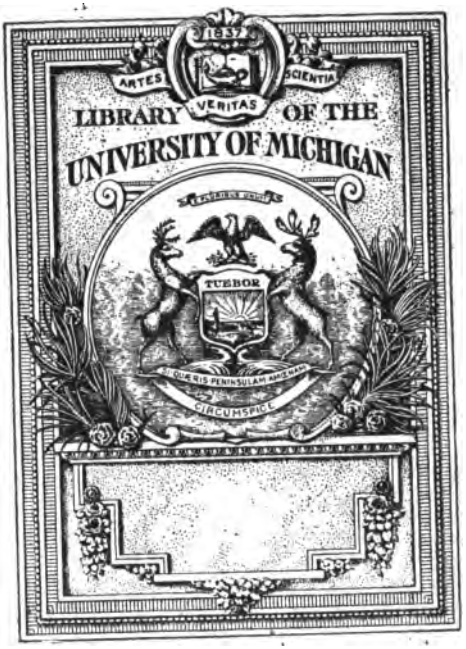
Christian Mysticism

by

Harry LeRoy Haywood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Christian Mysticism
and
Other Essays

HARRY LeROY HAYWOOD

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HARRY LeROY HAYWOOD

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AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

The essay which gives its title to this little book was prepared as a paper to be read before the Ministerial Association of my home city. The other two studies have been adapted from sermons preached to my people in the course of my regular ministry. There is no need to tell the observing reader that none of these pages were written with any thought that they might ever appear in the semi-permanent form in which he here finds them. Their appearance is wholly due to the efforts of Mr. Harold Marshall, the presiding genius of the Murray Press, a brother for whom I feel very much admiration and love; he insisted on gathering my fugitive pages into a volume at a time when the pressure of work made it impossible to recast them in more appropriate form. My sole justification for giving so imperfect a little book to the public is the hope that it may lead some kindred spirit to seek a closer walk with that little band of God-intoxicated spirits who hold in their hands today, as ever before, the destinies of religion.

The discerning reader will have found that my study of "The Secret Place of the Most High" was written under the immediate inspiration of Dr. James Martineau's masterly sermons on "The Sphere of Silence." There is no need that at this late day any one should undertake to pay a tribute to that transcendent pulpit genius whom Gladstone described as

"the greatest English thinker of his generation," nevertheless I desire that this present little book shall be accepted as an offering to his holy memory.

I am at a loss to understand now why I did not include among the books recommended on Mysticism the incomparable volumes written by my friend and colleague, Dr. Joseph Fort Newton. His seven volumes of sermons, his little study on "What the Saints Have to Teach Us," his "Wesley and Woolman," and, above all, his "Eternal Christ," are among the most beautiful and most richly rewarding utterances that I have ever read.

Waterloo, Iowa, October 1, 1917.

CHRISTIAN MYSTICISM

Let me confess at the very outset my absolute inability to define mysticism. Dean Inge appends twenty-six various definitions to his carefully written work on the subject; he might have made it two hundred and sixty. It is as impossible to capture so vast, so manifold, so elusive, a matter inside the narrow lasso of a definition as to wrap a string of words around any other great reality, such as beauty, love, religion, or even life itself. But if definition is impossible, perhaps I can so describe mysticism as to permit it to tell its own story.

It may help us toward this end if we will clear away from our minds one of the most popular misunderstandings of the whole subject, namely, that mysticism is some form of, or is closely allied to, occultism. Even so careful a student as Emerson made this mistake, as is witnessed by the fact that he uses Swedenborg as his representative of mysticism in his volume on Representative Men. Swedenborg was a psychic, or an occultist, or whatever else you may choose to call him, but mystic he was not, unless all who have hitherto written on that subject have gone far astray. Man has always desired to understand the natural forces playing about him and to learn to control them for his own purposes. In the days before science it was natural that the minds of men should hit upon the idea of a supernatural control

of nature; this belief in a supernatural control of the forces about us is what we call occultism. But occultism was not the precursor of mysticism, but of science, strange as that statement may now sound in our ears. Yet that is the fact, nevertheless, for it was astrology which engendered astronomy, and it was from alchemy that chemistry and physics were born. Mysticism had other forbears and to-day has other connections. If one is desirous of learning what an impassable gulf there is between the two let him read such present day journals as the *Channel* or the *Occult Review*, or, better still, let him read one of the greatest of al books every written on the subject, "The H story of Magic," by Eliphas Levi. The aim of occultism is power; the aim of mysticism is character. One is intellectual, the other ethical. The purpose of the occultist is the gaining of control over nature that he may have his way with her; the purpose of the mystic is to know God and to conform his own human will to the divine will, in which alone, as Dante said, there is our peace. If any two things differ more in their ultimate aims and methods I can not think what they are!

Mysticism is, then, a type of religion. I say "a" type, because, as I understand it, there are at least two fundamentally different forms of religion. Professor Sabat er has called them religions of authority and religions of the spirit. For our purposes to-day I shall prefer to call them religions that are mediated and religions that are immediate. My phraseology is not so easily understood at first, but is better for the task in hand.

By a mediated religion I understand that which holds that we can know God only at second hand, through the help of creeds, or sacraments, or church ordinances, or priests. Between God and man there is a great gulf fixed and the soul can not cross this gulf except by the bridges which some form of authority has made for it. In modern times Cardinal Newman is an outstanding example of such a position.

Among influential religious teachers of our day none other has so eloquently or persistently held that man in himself is incapable of knowing God. Newman's own life, as we shall see later, was built on an experience which contradicts this, nevertheless the weight of his great influence has been on the side of a mediated religion. In past times I suppose it is Scholasticism that offers us the best view of this type of religion working on a large scale. So suspicious were the Scholastics of anything even faintly tinged with a first hand attempt to find God that at the close of the twelfth century church authorities excommunicated, burned and otherwise made way with the followers of Amalrich, because that leader had chosen as his motto "that each of us is a member of Christ." It seems that these Atlases of the traditional faith had themselves entirely overlooked the Biblical doctrine of the Holy Spirit, but then that is what every man must do who erects his faith on the platform of external authority, be it in another man, in an institution, or in a book.

Wherever in history we see this mediated form of faith at work we find contrasted with it that which I

have called immediate religion. Emerson gives a true, if somewhat exaggerated, description of this in his Divinity School address, that lecture delivered before the students of Divinity College at Cambridge, and which Holmes called our "Declaration of Intellectual Independence." I link together two passages: "Meantime, the doors of the temple stand open, night and day, before every man, and the oracles of this truth cease never, it is guarded by one stern condition; namely: it is an intuition. It can not be received at second hand. . . . Yourself a newborn bard of the Holy Ghost,—cast behind you all conformity, and acquaint man at first hand with Deity!" What is this but a Yankee reading of the prophecy made by Jeremiah 2700 years ago: "I will put my law in their inward parts, and in their heart will I write it; and I will be their God and they shall be my people. And they shall teach no more every man his neighbor and every man his brother, saying, Know Jehovah; for they shall all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, sayeth Jehovah!"

This is not to say that Emerson spoke as a mystic, I doubt if he could be legitimately so classified, but it is to say that this religion of the spirit has in all ages furnished the soil out of which mysticism, of whatever form, has grown. For it is the very essence of mysticism to believe that God can be immediate y known in one's own consciousness, when that consciousness has become conscience, dross-drained, and attuned to the Heavenly Voices. Tennyson spoke for the whole brotherhood when he wrote:

"Speak to Him, thou, for He hears;
Spirit with spirit can meet;
Closer is He than breathing
And nearer than hands and feet."

This is the mystic's belief; his practise is to discover and to use the means which will enable him to make his own life one with the life of God. This "Life of God within the soul of man," and the attempt that men and women have made to describe and explain that immanent Life, and the methods used for realizing it—all this makes up the body of what we to-day are calling mysticism.

But this is not to say that the mystics use no external aids in their great enterprise of sanctity; the divine life in man is immediate but it is not instinctive. The mystics, like all of us, do not live in a vacuum; they also belong to the human tradition, with the old human traits and habits deeply inwoven, and they also, like the rest of us, are compelled to make use of whatever assistance the external world of nature or of men can offer them. And it is according to their choice of highways along which to travel to the Unseen that we classify them.

Some find in nature the "white sacrament" through which to pass into the Eternal Presence; we call them nature mystics. Of these the greatest modern example is that consumptive Englishman who has not yet received a tithe of the recognition which is his due, Richard Jefferies, whose books are like tapestries of sunbeam and shadow, and whose spirit was like a wisp of vapor transfigured in the heavens. There is not a finer grained volume in the whole litera-

ture of confessions than his "Story of My Heart," in whose pages you will find such expressions of nature mysticism as these sentences:

"I was intensely conscious of the light. I felt it; I felt the presence of the immense powers of the universe; I felt out into the depths of the ether. So intensely conscious of the sun, the sky, the limitless space, I felt too in the midst of eternity then, in the midst of the supernatural, among the immortal, and the greatness of the material realized the spiritual. By these I saw my soul; by these I knew my soul; by these I knew the supernatural to be more intensely real than the sun."

Such mysticism as this has never been absent from the world. In the ninth century in Persia the Sufis, in their reaction to the rigidities of Mohammedan orthodoxy, raised it to a lofty pitch. The Songs of Hafiz are full of it, as also are the songs of his modern child, Rabindranath Tagore. It was the same passion as that which filled the spirit of Watts-Dunton in our day, as expressed in his little essay on "Science and Poetry." It is the same spiritual splendor as that which entinctured the soul of Kingsley, as confessed in his biography, wherein he writes:

"The great mysticism is the belief which is becoming every day stronger with me, that all symmetrical natural objects are types of some spiritual truth or existence. When I walk the fields, I am oppressed now and then with an innate feeling that everything I see has a meaning, if I could but understand it. And this feeling of being surrounded with truths which I can not grasp, amounts to indescribable awe some

times. Everything seems to be full of God's reflex if we could but see it."

I recommend you to read this noble passage in its entirety; it is too long for me to incorporate here.

Another class of mystics are those who find in love or beauty the open door to God. Our best modern example here, according to my own belief, is Coventry Patmore, whose poetry should rest on every Christian's study table. If there is any surer, deeper-going plummet than he sometimes lets down, especially in the epi'ogues and prologues of his "Angel in the House," I have never discovered it. To him the love between man and woman is the most vivid of all symbolisms of the love that is God. He writes:

> "Female and male God made the man;
> His image is the whole, not half;
> And in our love we divinely scan
> The love which is between Himself."

In an unpublished manuscript called "Sponsa Dei" he declared this with such burning ardor that he was at last constrained to destroy the book lest he had used imagery that would prove too strong meat for the uninitiated. It was this passion for interpreting God's love for us through the love of man and woman that inspired him to make a famous saying. Pope had said before him, "The proper study of mankind is man." Arthur Edward Waite wrote, "The proper study of mankind is God." Patmore's version is, "The proper study of mankind is woman!"

This love mysticism is a very old thing. In the Middle Ages many of the saints used the Song of

Solomon in the same way. Indeed, this is the use it was put to in the days of King James, as the headings in our accepted version will testify, headings which might almost have been lifted from that golden little book, "On the Love of God," which St. Francis of Sales was good enough to write. And this Francis reminds us of that other greater Francis, he of Assisi, whose vision of the world was one of love and comradeship leading him into a fraternity with the animals, even, as the little brothers and sisters of man. If one desires to renew his sense of the love which rules the world let him read Francis's great hymn, "The Canticle of the Sun."

Of another leading are those who have found in the intellect the royal road to the Infinite Soul. The father of all such, I suppose, was Plotinus, that wonderful Egyptian whose story was preserved for us by Porphyry, and who drained the nectar of Greek philosophy into the wells of the Christian religion, giving us that blend of philosophy and faith which we call Neoplatonism. To Plotinus the intellectual faculties were as the steps of a ladder whereon the soul might mount into the very burning center of Deity. When he died he said, "The Divine within me goes now to meet the Divine outside me." Plotinus lived in the third century, nevertheless "the fire still burns on his altar," and there are evidences of his abiding influence. Again and again some great religious teacher has arisen who first lighted his taper at that far off fane. In the Middle Ages it is probably Jacob Boehme, "the inspired shoemaker," who stands as the head of philosophical mystics. It was his

teaching which kindled the enthusiasm of William Law, and it was Law, in turn, who did much to awaken Wesley to the discovery of his religion, which is a "felt salvation, a full salvation, and a free salvation." One of the very greatest of all these philosophical mystics was Thomas Traherne, who lived in England in the seventeenth century, and who was not discovered to the world until long, long afterwards. and then by accident. Traherne's "Centuries of Meditations" is richer than a ruby mine. That volume had a great influence on Blake, and Blake, as we all know, has wielded a spell over many of our more recent teachers and prophets. Of philosophical mystics, of the present time, so far as I know them, I imagine we should give the palm to Arthur Edward Waite. Waite's life work has been in literature and research; meanwhile his spirit has walked the mystic way, and the volumes in which his literary powers are placed at the service of his spiritual insight are second to none in profundity, piercing intuitions and scholarship. His "Studies in Mysticism" are easier to read than his "Way of Divine Union," but the latter is the greater book, a book so great, in my own estimation, that I shall not attempt to describe it lest I be accused of exaggeration.

The philosophical mystic builds a reasoned system of thought upon his mystical experiences, and it is through thought that many of those experiences have come to him; there are other mystics, however, close akin to these, who are content with the depth of experience itself and have no ambitions to philosophize. These are the religious or devotional mystics.

In many ways their spirits have been the sweetest, their sanctity the divinest, their influences the farthest reaching and the most wholesome. To them the beatific vision has come through the path of prayer and meditation. The greatest of all woman mystics, Saint Teresa, stands in this class. I myself have not yet got round to a very careful study of Saint Teresa, but even in what glimpses I have of her, her spirit looms so far toward the heavenly heights it has impressed me with that same feeling of unworthiness under which Peter bent when he cried, "Depart from me for I am a sinful man." Fenelon is nearer our common human clay, albeit there was evident in his noble spirit little of its frailty. If one desired to begin the reading of mystical literature I know of no books that would give him a kindlier welcome than the Letters of Fenelon or the Life of Fenelon written by Dr. Mudge. If Fenelon is the first for a neophyte to read I suppose Ruysbroeck would be the last. Of this profound spirit I shall prefer to let Mr. Waite speak:

"If his be not the greatest name in Christian mysticism—as a writer of memorials in attainment—I should bracket it with that of Eckehart and that of St. John of the Cross, but I have a feeling that he stands first in the ladder of the ascent to the supernals. He has drawn from heights almost inacessible, and up from hardly sounded wells of being, such rumors of eternal things and states of the soul therein as have never passed otherwise into language in the Christian world."

These are the various groups of mystics—Nature, Love, Philosophical and Devotional. Gathered about

the edge of these is a large number who have been drawn toward the life but have never yielded themselves entirely to it, albeit they have tasted of its hidden manna and drunk from its brimming wells. Instead of calling these mystics let us call them mystical. But while they have not belonged entirely to mysticism their influence must be counted on that side, for their life work has almost invariably had its origin in some mystical experience. Inasmuch as I am writing of mysticism rather than the mystics, I can not forbear mentioning a few of these.

Thus, St. Augustine, who from his throne in the invisible, ruled the thought of Europe for a thousand years and wielded an empire alongside which Napoleon's sway was as a child's dream, wrestled with doubt and weakness until on that memorable day he sat in the Garden of Alypius and heard the voice singing, "Take up and read! Take up and read!" The vision of things supernal which then and there came to him, the opening up of the eternal life, stands as one of those fountainheads out of which, now and then, the world gets itself new born.

Who can compute the influence of Luther on the world? What would Luther have been had he not found God within him? So also with Fox. The entire movement which bears his name had not its beginning in him, properly speaking, but in his awakening to an Over Soul inside his own. What would Catholicism have been after the Reformation had not Ignatius Loyola chanced to read the New Testament while lying wounded in bed in an obscure Spanish hamlet, and thereby had opened to his

inward vision the everlasting Reality? Who can believe that Methodism would have been born to save England from revolution and America from formalism had not John Wesley, in the little Aldersgate prayer-meeting, felt that "strange warming of his heart?" How would the Tractarian movement have been born to call England back to her walk with God had not Newman while yet a boy in an evangelical home passed through the crisis of the new birth, from which there emerged his conviction of "two and two only absolutely and luminously self-evident beings, myself and my Creator?" All these may not be counted among the mystics proper, yet their work in the world must surely be counted to the credit of mysticism.

Widely diverse as these have all been, mystical and mystics, they have had in common the one profound experience of the immediate Presence of God, and they have, for the most part, in spite of their various personal idiosyncrasies, used the same methods, not consciously as following a formula, but instinctively, because the soul is so made that she must in the long run always travel the same path to reach her goal. Out of this common experience there has gradually evolved that tradition of the mystic life which we call the Mystic Way. The Mystic Way is the answer to our question, How does the mystic climb the steep ascent to heaven? Inasmuch as one could write thousands of essays and hundreds of books on that Way, we shall obviously be able to do no more than sketch it in a few words.

It begins, as all religious life begins, with conversion, whether that new birth be sudden, like Kipling's

dawn that "comes up like thunder," or gradual, like Homer's quiet waking of the rosy-fingered morn. One of the typical experiences here is the conversion of Madame Guyon, who, though she does not rank as the first among the great mystics, has a right to a place in the great line. When nineteen years of age this woman went to a Franciscan friar to inquire the way of the soul. Let me give the story of what happened in her own words:

"He hardly came forward and was a long time without speaking to me. I, however, did not fail to speak to him and to tell him in a few words my difficulties on the subject of prayer. He at once replied, 'Madam, you are seeking without that which you have within. Accustom yourself to seek God in your own heart, and you will find Him.' Having said this, he left me. The next morning he was greatly astonished when I visited him again and told him the effect which these words had had upon my soul: for, indeed, they were as an arrow, which pierced my heart through and through. I felt in this moment a profound wound which was full of delight and love—a wound so sweet that I desired it would never heal. O, my Lord, you were within my heart, and you asked of me only that I should return within, in order that I might feel your presence. O, Infinite Goodness, you were so near, and I, running here and there to seek you, found you not!"

After such an experience as this the mystic passes through purgation. Everything within the character must now be readjusted to the new knowledge of God. It has been in this effort that the mystics

have often subjected themselves to those extravagances of asceticism which now so shock our more easy going methods. But, extravagant or not, the soul can never rest in God except she have herself dross-drained and pure, and some form of purgation is necessary to that end.

After purgation there usually comes illumination. This is as the honeymoon of the Mystic Way, a season when the worshiper is so caught up into light and joy that it is not lawful for us here to describe it even if we could. Illumination is succeeded by the most awful experience which can come to mortal man. It is that nadir of despair when the spirit, swinging pendulum-like back from the new light, returns once more into its own depths and there begins a more profound purgation which ultimately leaves not a shred of the old self-centered life behind. This is the Dark Night of the Soul. If you wish to learn just how much a mortal can suffer read some of the first hand descriptions of that descent into hell.

Out of these depths the spirit again ascends in due time to the final stage, that of union, wherein a man no longer lives but Christ lives in him, so that the mystic is indifferent to the vicissitudes of his own fate, but lives as an organ through which God can reveal Himself to the world.

I know that this description of the Mystic Way sounds hard-and-fast, like a geometrical design, and it is that. Life in the actual process of living doesn't always follow the route-maps which we lay out for it, but this is an approximation to the story of the Way, though we must bear in mind that very few mystics

have trod it to the final end, as Dante did when he came right up to the unfolding of the Eternal Rose and found his faculties swept away in the last beatitude. Only the elect souls can tread it at all; the most of us must be content with following afar off.

The Mystic Way, as I have described it, is common to both Christian and non-Christian mystics alike, though they describe it in different language. We must ever bear in mind that mysticism is a universal form of religion. The non-Christian mystic is one who has walked the path outside the influence of the Gospels; the Christian is one who has walked it under the guidance of Christ and of the Christian Church.

I wish I had time to deal for a little with the Christian mystic's understanding of Christ. There is time only to say this, that to him the character of Christ was not a ready-made magically created thing, but an achievement; that the Master had to walk each step of the way himself and had to taste to the full the difficulties and sorrows of the life of man and God; and that to follow Christ does not mean to accept with the mind some patented scheme of theology, but means to retrace in our own experience the stages through which he himself passed. This is not a mere imitation of Christ's life, but a reproduction of it.

Neither is there time to give our own verdict on the mystics, even if such as we could possibly claim the right to judge such as they. However, before we conclude, I must speak of one or two of the more current criticisms of the mystics.

They are sometimes accused of sloth, and charged

with an indifference to the actual work of life, living alone, nursing their own visions, as so many religious aristocrats, neither toiling nor spinning the web of human destiny. It is pointed out that Teresa did not leave her cell for twenty years, refusing often during that time even to see her family.

Those who speak thus have read only a fragment of the records. They have not followed the story of Teresa, after she was accepted by the Father and sent to do his work after her long tarrying in Jerusalem, when she made Spain a new country through her prodigious active ministries. They have forgotten that while St. Bernard spent much time in prayer he was also a statesman who held Europe in his hand. They have forgotten that it was St. Francis who drove leprosy from Europe and undermined feudalism. They have forgotten—but there is not time to rehearse the labors of the mystics in the regeneration of the world.

Others sometimes accuse the mystics of vagueness, dreaminess, remarking that the very word mysticism derives from a Greek term meaning to close the eyes. But mysticism is the very opposite of that, it is the effort of man at his highest to find Reality, to dispel all mists and fogginess from his soul. You will not find such lucid minds anywhere as in many of them. They sound vague only when we have followed them out of our depths. As the Master is reported by Clement of Alexandria to have said, "My mysteries are for me and the sons of my house."

On all these matters I can only urge you to go to the literature itself and there verify for your own

minds these things which I am saying. Of that literature one can here say little. The masterpieces of the mystics themselves may be purchased, many of them, in Methuen's Library of Devotion, little volumes bound in green, which may be purchased for a quarter apiece. If one cares to go into it for a careful study he might well begin with Will Dyson's little "Studies in Christian Mysticism," an elementary text-book of the subject. Then he could turn to Fleming's "Mysticism in Christianity," which would lead him on to the two volumes of sterling value by R. M. Jones. By this time he would appreciate Mrs. Herrman's sparkling treatise, "The Meaning and Value of Mysticism," which in turn, would lead to Miss Underhill's great volume, "Mysticism," and to her "Mystic Way." After this would come Waite's "The Way of Divine Union," and, last of all, the greatest of all, "The Mystical Element in Religion," written by that Roman Catholic theologian, Baron von Hugel.

Surely the time has come when we preachers can not permit ourselves to remain in ignorance of these masters of the art of living the spiritual life. It seems to me that a preacher who doesn't know his St. Augustine or his a Kempis is as derelict as the musician who has never familiarized himself with Wagner or Beethoven. Sooner or later we are going to learn that all our efforts to win men to the Gospel by talking to them about temporary problems, social, political, or even personal, are doomed to fail. Man is a God-haunted being crying for the divine, knowing in his heart, as Augustine has it, that we are made for Him

and that our hearts are restless until they rest in Him. In the day when we preachers rediscover that our one and only business, as preachers, is with the soul, and with God, and with the eternal destinies of the mysterious human spirit, we shall instinctively turn and place ourselves under the feet of the saints. Then and then only shall we learn how truly to preach so that our words will drop from our lips like cannon-balls, and men will tremble as in the sight of the Lord.

Speaking for myself, if that liberty may here be permitted, I may say it was as the beginning of a new life in my ministry when I learned to walk with the mystics. They have taught me many, many things, not the least of which is that if religion is to be *my* religion it must somehow become a matter of my own consciousness, and also that as long as a man has his own will at the center of his life instead of God's will he is an egotist and a lost man. Not until we are able to join the Master and the mystics in the Garden and say, not only with our lips but with our lives, "Not my will but Thine be done," shall we even begin to know what Christianity really is, for the way of the mystics is the way of the divine life, every son of which might take for his motto that great word uttered by one of the old German saints, "I want to be to the Eternal Goodness what a man's right arm is to a man."

THE SECRET PLACE OF THE MOST HIGH

The Kabalah, with its strange lights, its broken shadows, its echoes of mysterious dead philosophies, is now an unknown name to all save those few antiquarians who busy themselves among the whispers of an old past. But once was when every thinker kept its literature at his elbow, finding among its cryptic teachings many light-darting jewels of profound meaning. It was a favorite device of the Jewish theosophists who created the Kabalah literature to reduce their visions of Divine truth to symbolical form, thereby becoming enabled to tell much on a single page. One of their favorite symbols was that of a human figure with the various hieroglyphs of the knowledge of God distributed among its limbs, thereby suggesting that the human is a gate-way through which we pass into the Divine. This symbolism has now lost its voice, and stares at us mutely from the yellow pages, wholly unable to express itself in our modern speech; but surely the truth itself, that we walk into the heart of God along the ways of man, abides still, and must abide. I myself feel this, at any rate, in regard to the vexed question of God's manner of revealing Himself, for I am convinced that if we can really comprehend the secrets of man's speech we

shall be thereby enabled to interpret the speech of God.

Whatever else we may believe about the mechanism of expression, there is one fact of great significance of which we must lay hold, for it will lead us far, and that fact is this: that we humans use speech for two very different purposes; one is to communicate our thoughts, that is, to *instruct* others as to our purposes, to direct, to command, to inform; the other is to *reveal* that which is within us, to confess, to share with another our own inmost experiences and silent dreams. The first is practical, pragmatic, having as its end the getting of some work done; the other is mystical, evasive, shy, and has for its end the bringing of another into fellowship with our own heart. The former we might describe as the speech of information; the latter as the speech of revelation.

An architect carries his plans with him to his building, lays out the day's labor for his men, instructs them as to his designs, and then gives them directions from time to time as to how this and how that should be done. This is an example of what I have called, for lack of a term more adequate, the speech of *instruction.* A poet sits by the broken rocks that guard the approaches of the sea; he looks out over the moving waters on which the mists are weaving their transient tapestries; he watches the gulls dipping and feels the salt moisture on his cheek; as he gazes, the sea becomes for him an emblem of the troubled deep of life, and he seems to go down under the many waters of tragedy, or to be enveloped in the tides of mystery. So he begins to write:

"Break, break, break, on thy cold gray stones, O sea!"

That is the speech of *revelation*, which has for its end no other purpose than the communication of the poet's inmost feelings to those who may care to listen.

Literatures of Power and Knowledge

It is this two-fold character of speech that gave its point to DeQuincey's famous dictum, that books are naturally divided into two classes: the literature of knowledge and the literature of power; for it is obvious that the literature of knowledge can be nothing other than a man's desire to communicate information, or direction, to his fellows; and that the literature of power is simply a man's attempt to *reveal* to others, to share with them his inward experiences of this mystery which we call life.

The literature of knowledge has become voluminous in our day. Text-books for schools; volumes of science, pure and applied; histories; encyclopedias; dictionaries; reference works of other types; trade journals; newspapers; all these and numberless others are coming forth in ever increasing number to instruct us of the facts necessary to know in this our present pilgrimage. Such literature is valuable and interesting, nay, it is essential and indispensable, and often of very great worth.

It differs, however, fundamentally and eternally, from that other type of writing which springs from man's self-confession of experience. It is here that we find the sacred books of the race: its Bible, its Vedas, its Koran; its Kalevela; poetry and song,

drama and fiction, except where fiction is made the vehicle of propaganda; prophecy and inspirational literature of many kinds, and, very often, philosophy.

How deep-going is the difference between these two types of books may be made very clear to us by a concrete example. On one side of my table as I write is a copy of Professor Macoy's very able "History of Political Parties of America, 1846-1861;" and on the other side is a volume by Emerson containing his lectures delivered during the same period as that covered by the history. But how different they are, even though in the lectures we are confronted by those same problems with which the political parties wrestled in that troubled time. The former volume gives us names, facts, dates, etc., in plentiful number; the latter gives us the broodings of a great spirit in which the Civil War had become an intimate experience.

"Men change but man remains the same," said the wise Goethe. It is for this reason, and not because of any desire to make invidious comparisons, that we must recognize the fact that the literature of knowledge is in its very nature transient and perishable, while the literature of power will often survive the centuries. This is due to the fact that knowledge is always changing, new facts come and old facts go, and what is science in one generation becomes superstition in the next. "But man remains the same." Always he is confronted by "the show of things," by nature with her lights and half-lights, her ritual of seasons, by the baffling tragedies of existence, by love and hate, by

dream and disillusionment, and by the subduing mysteries of sorrow and death. Therefore is it that a true note from the soul will often outlast the pyramids and remain while literatures of knowledge vanish away.

Thales was a scientist wise in his own age, a thinker with a continental brain, the master of many facts; but his writings to-day seem childish and absurd when read alongside the last volume from the universities. Homer, on the contrary, seems timeless as the soul itself; his pages still have power to grip our minds, and the school-boy of to-day can join the Athenian youth of a remote yesterday in hanging with breathless interest over the old tales on which lie the dew of a never waning morning.

To understand a book belonging to the literature of knowledge we need nothing more than a mind of average strength and a certain equipment of information. Such books may, so to speak, be taken apart, like a machine, their parts examined and their ingredients analyzed. But to understand a book belonging to the literature of power, imagination is needed, and sympathy, and a certain intuitive power of insight. Anybody who can take the time to accumulate his data and who learns to arrange it in an intelligible order can write the former type of book; how the real book of power is written can never be learned, for it belongs to the secret of genius. A school-boy can take apart the tables in the "World's Almanac" and learn how it is done; but no amount of dissecting will ever teach school-boy or man how to write a "Paradise Lost."

God's Two-Fold Speech

Now, the significance of all this for our religion is that the speech of man, who is made, as we believe, in the image of God, is an analogy, nay, if I may borrow an expression from science, a "working model," of the speech of God. God also speaks for these two purposes—to instruct, to guide, to inform us; and to reveal the secrets of His own infinite heart.

Like the architect of our previous illustration, God has a plan for the world, for He is the artificer of the destinies of the individual and of the race. Our human history may appear to be a mere jumble of unrelated happenings, but it is not, for behind the chaos of events there silently shapes itself the Divine plan of creation, a plan toward which the ages move. The incidents of our experiences, the events of history, the objects of the material universe, these are the facts which God has spread before us, His words of information and command, the better to enable us to carry into realization His beneficent purpose with man.

Just as the student may analyze a volume written for human instruction, dissecting it into its elements, breaking it into its constituent parts, the better to discover its teaching, so does science work with the book of God's instruction which we call the universe. It is man's way of cataloguing the facts that God has given us that we may the better carry on His work: His, yet ours, for He has delegated much of it to us. In the eye of science, God is an architect, the universe reveals His plan, and science is the attempt to interpret and follow the plan.

From this point of view, religion becomes one

among the many agencies of social reform, a means to an end, designed to assist in the necessary formation of the race. The aim of faith becomes the setting up of the kingdom of God on earth; churches are organized to that end, and belief is the dynamic of its realization; theology becomes the attempt to understand the Divine plan the better to carry it out; and character is examined from the point of view of morality. With such an understanding of religion the Christian becomes a soldier of the common weal, undertaking necessary reforms in society, a worker of human architecture, who demands that above all things religion shall justify itself in tangible results.

All this is valid, is true, is commendable beyond all words; he who would quarrel w'th it forgets a full half of the cause and purpose of religion; nevertheless, it is only a hemisphere of the world of faith, and he who stops there will miss from his life of worship the better half. For God is a being as well as a purpose, and does not exhaust Himself in His active plans. To borrow the language of James Martineau, a superb thinker, an incomparable seer, gifted above almost all other men of his times with the "divine power to use words," God also "is a Mind, reserving within Himself infinite powers, ever awake and moving; thought, large as space and deep and solemn as the sea; holiness, stern as the mountains, and pure as the breath that sighs around them; a mercy, quick as the light, and gentle as the tints that make it. It s not for these to remain inert and repressed, as though they were not. They must have way, and reach their overflow; and if only we place our spirits

right, we may catch the blessed flood, and find it as the waters of regeneration. Beyond and behind every definite end of which it is needful to appraise us, there actually exists in the divine nature an indefinite affluence of living perfection, which can not go for nothing in the universe. It may not have a word to say to others; but whispers will escape it on its own account; it may not be heard, and yet articulately overheard; and, could we only find the focus of those stray tones, we should understand more than any knowledge can tell; we should learn the very prayers that Heaven makes for only Heaven to hear, and should catch the soliloquy of God. And not only can we find it, but we are ever in it; and beneath the dome of the universe, which is all center and no circumference, we can not stand where the musings of the eternal mind do not murmur round us, and the visions of His lonely, loving thought appear."

The Secret of the Seer

These are great matters greatly said, and give us the true secret of the prophet and the seer and the poet, for to all these God is an end in Himself, if I may hazard so awkward an expression, to be reverenced and obeyed, not for the sake of His purposes, but for His own infinitely lovable being. To such mystics religion is an end in itself, the purpose of it being, if we must use that term, the leading of the human heart into the secret places of the Most High Heart.

"Why does this universe exist?" asked one friend of another, while sitting together under a moonlit sky. "It exists," was the reply, "just in order that

you and I might sit here together." There is a wisdom beneath the surface of these words that teaches us the great, and almost forgotten, end of religion, which is that we may live in the enjoyment of companionship with God. If action grows meaningless to us, and the hard work of life sometimes palls upon us, and we grow inwardly restless and discontented, it is because God has made us for Himself, and our hearts must be restless until they rest in Him!

It is the great misfortune of those who are smitten with the superstition of always being busy that they miss the supreme joy of hiding in the secret places of the Most High; they are ever doing things, piling up achievements around the circumference of life, but they are hollow at the center, and know naught of the cooling shadow of His wings, or of that perfect fruition of life which comes alone to them who have learned the secret of loving God. It is in that still center that the mystic lives, and the poet, and, oftentimes, the child; he who has permitted his heart to grow old within him, who has let the poet die, and the faculties of wonder and reverence, "has a name to live," but, in all high senses of life, is really dead.

The Revelations of Summer

If there is one season in the year, more than another, fitted to awaken in us the sense of a Divine Presence, it is summer, whose ritual of long days and enchanting nights is now beginning about us. Wise is he who will often stray alone under the voyaging clouds, lost in still reveries, breathing in an air more than the atmosphere, inhaling fragrances from the

flowers that know so much more than they tell; in the slanting rain, the green spread of fields, the murmuring streams, the hide and seek of storms, the golden arching of the daytime sky, the night lighting of the heaven, finding, not a workman, merely, toiling to achieve an end, but an Infinite Being, in love with His own life, engaged in a never tiring game with Himself, like an Infinite Child. In such hours the body is laid at rest and man becomes a living soul. One such hour will teach us more than all the sages can.

He who would thus climb into the secret place of the Most High must guard well his faculty of reverence, for that is nothing other than the soul's sense of touch which brings it into contact with the beauty of the Invisible One. As when sight goes we lose the outspread feast of light, and form, and color, and shade, so when reverence goes we necessarily lose the more subtle revelations of God which are reserved for those that love Him. Without reverence a man may be worldly wise, and successful after the coarse measure of the world, but in the things of the soul he is an imbecile.

This means that we must keep alive in us the spirit of the child. For what God is in Himself, in contradistinction to what He does, is reserved wholly for those who have the intuitive mind, the clairvoyant understanding, the poetic faculty of sympathy; and these live only in the unsophisticated soul. There are many things, the deepest things of existence, which God can not reveal to the scholar, the wise and the learned, but reserves for the babes.

Always we must reserve a still center in our being

in which to overhear the silent whisperings of our God, even as the Quietists of all generations have taught us; a habit of reverent listening; a faculty for feeling the companionship of the reticent Father of the heart. The picture-book of the external world must be laid aside, the soul must patiently drive from its precincts the almost endless pageantry of imagery which seeks to monopolize its consciousness; it must learn how to wait with patience in the withdrawn Holy of Holies, to listen for the overtones of the Infinite self-communings, to stretch itself down into the divine darkness that lies behind the moving-picture screen of every day consciousness, in order to enter into the shadow, the cooling, healing, all-satisfying shadow, that lies under the quiet wings of the Almighty.

THE INVISIBLE WORLD

During those seven golden years while he stood in St. Mary's at Oxford, laying England under the strange enchantment of his voice, John Henry Newman preached a sermon on the same topic that we now have before us. Taking as his text the great utterance of Paul, "While we look not at the things which are seen, but at the things which are not seen; for the things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal," he unfolded paragraph after paragraph of such serene and silvery eloquence that until this day the sermon stands as a classic in homiletical literature. One of the men who heard it was Walter Bagehot, banker, financier, and political economist, of great practical experience and sagacity. So drawn was he by the unearthly appeal of the sermon that he had it printed and bound in a separate volume that he might carry it about with him in his pocket, the better to renew its influences from time to time. In the midst of the clatter and secularism of Fleet Street he kept it in his breast, turning ever and again to harken to its echoes from the Unseen World.

This may be taken as a little parable of human life. For we are all citizens of two worlds, whether we acknowledge it publicly or not, haunted beings who feel ever at hand the presence of the invisible. However deeply immersed we may become in the

things of the moment, there is that in us which stirs now and then with an uneasy consciousness of a world beyond this world. We are like mariners strayed into the busy inland cities who hear above the clamor of thoroughfares the sea's murmurs drifting softly over the far horizon walls.

What is this Invisible World? Of what is it composed? How may we know it better? One of the central thoughts in Newman's sermon is that angels and other celestial beings are ever about us, moving the winds, guiding the stars, and stirring the sluggish currents of life. Escaping our physical vision, they are always at work, and it is they who compose the major citizenship of the Invisible. Thus felt Newman, as many another prophet had felt before him.

If the Invisible World were to be thought of as merely the realms of the living dead it would have slight claim on us who wrestle here with the undeniable harsh facts of the earth.

But there is an Invisible World about us, close at hand, as indubitably real as rocks and water, and wise are we to discover it and to live in it. We need only look to see it, we need only reflect upon our commonest experiences to discover that in it we constantly live, and move, and have our being.

Recently, in our Capital City, I passed through the great House of the Temple, one of the noblest buildings in the country. On either side of the atrium stands a row of gigantic granite pillars hewn from the quarries of Vermont. Gazing up their fluted sides to where they buried their chapiters in the twilights

above, I said to myself, "Surely, if anything is real, and tangible, and actual, these are. We human beings will pass on through generation after generation of a life that is half a dream, but these will stand, sarcastic, immovable, and undeniable."

But after all, had I reflected more, I should have understood that even these granite monoliths belong to the unseen as much as an angel. If a fragment had been broken off with a hammer, carried to the physicist's laboratory, and there analyzed and thrown into the mold of his scientific theories, strange things would have transpired. The scientist would first have broken the granite into its constituent parts, the molecules. The molecule in turn would have further divided into its parts, which are atoms. The atom, though the word itself means that which can not be further divided, would next have fallen apart into a system of electrons, billions of which are required for one atom of matter. But there is no stopping even there, for it is believed that the electron is itself a tiny whirlpool in the ether. And what is the ether? It is a "substance" infinitely fluid yet infinitely solid, a thing that flees from our senses, and remains as invisible and undiscoverable as any spirit.

It was this series of facts which led Ernest Haeckel, the very high priest of materialism, to admit that matter escapes us at last, vanishing like Shakespeare's baseless fabric of a dream, that what it is in itself eludes us, and that at bottom it may, for all we know, be spirit. Ages ago Hindu metaphysicians said that Reality comes up out of the Unseen, tarries awhile on the stage of the Apparent, and vanishes again into the

Invisible whence it came. The whole material universe, as a matter of cold fact, is but a brief gesture of the Unapparent Infinite Reality, a dream woven between the soul and God.

Persons are Invisible

As for the soul itself, who can deny its invisibility? There is no need that a man die in order to live in the Unseen. I have stood in this pulpit, now, a hundred times or more; some of you, and the fact speaks eloquently of your patience, have seen me here that often. But have you really seen ME? No, you never have; nor have I ever seen YOU, either, for what we see is not the man but the man's body. "Put me in prison," exclaimed Socrates! "They can if they can catch me."

> "We are spirits clad in veils;
> Man by man was never seen;
> All our deep communing fails
> To remove the shadowy screen."

If I were compelled to choose between the reality of the soul and the reality of the body I should unhesitatingly choose the reality of the soul. How do you know that your body exists? Because certain intimations come to your consciousness by means of your apparatus of nerves. But how do you know that your nerves are not deceiving you as your eyes do when they tell you that the earth is flat? You can not know. You can only take the verdict of your senses on faith. But the soul!—that is the real YOU, which you are conscious of immediately, and

not through the mediation of your senses. You are a soul; you have a body. And nothing is more certainly real, even as nothing is more certainly invisible, than your own essential being.

Our whole human world, indeed, rests upon, and carries continued reference to, the Invisible. At my elbow lies a book. To the eye it is a body of matter, of a certain shape, with white spaces of paper, on which are inscribed curious crooked marks. That is, the book is a material object. But what can such an object mean to us? Almost nothing. The book rises into meaning only when I interpret the strange black marks with reference to some mind, my own, or the author's, and neither of these minds can anybody see. What is true of a book, is equally true of a picture, or a piece of music, or a statue. If the Unseen dropped out of our daily lives it would be as if the alphabet dropped out of our language.

Business, the most mundane of pursuits, perhaps, is an interaction of spirits; so is government. He who walks through the city of Washington, that home of congressmen and Southern leisureliness, will see the public buildings, and the Capitol; he may sit in the galleries of the two houses. But all this is not government. For government is an interchange of thoughts, an interaction of wills; and thought and will, and the persons to whom they belong, are as invisible as Cardinal Newman's angels. Material objects change and pass, assume their forms, then vanish away; like clouds they shape themselves and go; but the Unseen upon whose bosom matter rests is here for ever. For God, as Job remarked long

ago, has hung the earth upon Nothing! Out of that which exists not for the eye, He hath fashioned the brown earth and the star-fretted vault above it.

What a stay and comfort this fact is in these days when so many of our families in Canada and in Europe have seen their husbands and sons disappear into the grave-trenches of the battlefields! These men have not passed into nothingness; in other worlds, and they may be worlds close by us, they still tread the dim and perilous way of life.

When Jesus went from his disciples' vision it is said that "a cloud received him out of their sight." What a contrast is this to the description given us of Buddha's death: "He hath gone into that utter passing away, from which there is nothing to return." Between these two sentences one can measure the vast distance that lies between Buddhism, the message of despair, and Christianity, the Gospel of Hope. To the Buddhist, death means extinction; to us it means that the visible veil has been dropped, but that the soul, always invisible, continues to live on as before.

Homeliness of the Unseen

To the ancient people the World Beyond was a region of gloomy shadows or of monstrous existences. Even to Isaiah it brought no hope, except of a vague unreal existence in the dusky caverns of Sheol. To the Greeks and Romans it was even more uninviting, Homer telling us that princes would rather be shepherds on the earth than reign in Hades. If you turn from that to early Christianity you find the air

different and a new light in heaven. Glorious did the simple followers of Jesus see the home of the soul beyond the pillars of the tomb, many of them even sighing to be released from the bondage of the flesh in order to enter the sooner into the eternal summer-land. What wrought this change? It was that in the interim Jesus had passed into the Unseen. He is there now, with his humanity with him, warm and living, full of human interests.

My friends, let it be so with us. The Invisible World is no strange place, no vast stretch of chill darkness stretching through the night. We live now in it, tasting its reality, knowing its laws, and what it is now it will surely continue to be. Those mothers who have gone before, whose sweet names we this day commemorate; the little toddlers who saw so brief a span upon the earth; those dear friends that we have loved long since and lost awhile; all these are there, as human as ever, unseen but real. A cloud has received them out of our sight, but still they live and ever shall. How mysterious is this life of ours!

> "We seem to come, we seem to go;
> But whence or whither who can know?
> Unemptiable, unfillable,
> It's all in that one syllable.
> God! God first! God last!
> God Infinitesimally vast."

Even now we live imbedded in Him. If He were to withdraw Himself from us for the fraction of a second we should all fall into nothingness. A cloud surrounds Him for our physical eye, but always the pure in heart can see Him.